

An Interview with Nancy D. Waters
Friday, August 31
BYU Broadcasting Studio

My name is Nancy D. Waters and I was a BYU student back in the olden days of 1974-1979. I spent most of my time in the Harris Fine Arts Center because I was a music education student. I had the opportunity to be taught by many wonderful teachers here.

I've come back to BYU today to talk about one great professor who helped to change my life. His name is Dr. S. Gordon Jessop. We were celebrating his retirement last night with the BYU faculty and I had the opportunity to tell some stories about my experiences here. I started out with a little bit of this: (Sings a scat song). Yep, I'm a scat singer and a saxophone player. I played in Synthesis in the good old days. Gordon Jessop was my music education professor.

The story that I wanted to tell you happened in February of 1979. I was doing some student teaching at Rock Canyon Elementary School. I guess something happened that day where I felt like I was not doing a perfect job and I remember calling Gordon later and saying to him, "I just feel terrible! I feel like I haven't been successful!" I was pouring my heart out to him.

Well, to my surprise, the next time we were at Rock Canyon Elementary, I went out to my car after the morning and there was a note on the car. The note was from Gordon and it said that my call to him had really touched him and had caused him to write some philosophy. He said it was mostly inward directed but he hoped the message would help me.

What he left for me was a poem that I want to share with you now. He named it *Checks and Balances*. It's a poem that has helped me throughout my life and has helped me to get through some tough times. It goes like this:

CHECKS AND BALANCES

Written for Nancy D. Waters by her inspired BYU teacher and mentor,

Dr. S. Gordon Jessop

I can't recall a niche in time,
When life was sweet without the climb.
And seldom made without a fall,
This law of life imposed on all.
And yet, How oft I seek the easy way.
Full-knowing there's a price to pay.
Trying the exception to the rule,
And finding I'm the one I fool.
Yes, all things precious, good, and dear
Just can't be bought without a tear.
And toil, and ache, and hurt, and strife,
This sacrifice is part of life.
Oh frailty of human heart!

The race is lost before its' start
When fear and doubt all good o'er-ride
And scatter logic far and wide.
And yet, It needn't be that way
At least not longer than a day.
A remedy I'm told is true.
"Adopt a different point of view."

My teacher wrote that for me, and it changed my life. It helped me to become a music teacher and later a school principal. I want to thank Gordon Jessop, on behalf of all the students who have been able to have him as a professor, because he really made a difference in my life.

So when I got the call from another beloved professor, Susan Kenney, to come and have an opportunity to speak as we celebrated the career of Gordon Jessop, I decided to put pen to paper myself and I wrote something that I then shared with Gordon last night. I called it *My Gift*.

My Gift

What do you say to the one who inspires you
to be the BEST you can be?
What words can express the gratitude felt
When a teacher's example is key?
Key to the choices you make in life—
Key to the person you are.
How do you thank such a mentor as this,
whose trust in you helped you go far?
It's not in the words you say to the man,
Or the physical things you can give.
The way to express your love for his gift is
to share what he taught as you live.
Share the compassion. Touch hearts as you
Teach. Spread joy wherever you go.
The life that you live, is the gift that you
give, to the one who helped you to grow.

Written for Dr. Gordon Jessop, my teacher and mentor...

Nancy D. Waters

I am so grateful that I had the opportunity at BYU to be taught by wonderful teachers, and that their influence helped me to do the best that I could. It is my hope that if I've touched even one life in the way that mine was touched, that the world will be a better place.

Thank you.